

a stalagmite has risen, the two meeting and acting as a bridge for the water. 133*
 Back of the village of Gu-dù is a large enclosure surrounded by beautiful 312
 oaks; this is the great *mu-an-bpö d'a* (place of worship) where the people of
 Bbër-ddër propitiate Heaven.

The hamlets are dirty, as are the inhabitants. The foundations of the 342
 houses are built of rock with a superstructure of logs and mud bricks. Others,
 again, are made entirely of logs, like Swiss chalets. They are low and their
 roofs of boards are weighted down with rocks (PLATE 132). The women are very 156
 shy and flee like deer at one's approach. They wear a much-pleated skirt of 291
 hemp cloth, similar to the women of Mba-yi-wù and those of the Miao tribe.

The sacred grotto Shi-lo ne-k'o. — Bbër-ddër is a famous place of pilgrimage, 778
 for it is the wish of every Dto-mba, or Na-khi sorcerer (perhaps better called
 priest), to visit Bbër-ddër once in his life and make a pilgrimage to Shi-lo
 ne-k'o, a cave in the mountains hemming in Bbër-ddër to the east. This cave
 is also, but less commonly, spoken of as Shi-lo 'a-k'o. There Dto-mba Shi-lo,
 founder of the Na-khi religion (Shamanism), was said to have lived, and from
 there he taught the people and spread his creed. Dto-mba Shi-lo is none other
 than sTon-pa gShen-rabs (pronounced Tön-pa Shen-rab), founder of the ancient
 pre-Buddhistic Bön religion of Tibet, often also spoken of as Tön-pa Shen-rab-
 mi-bo ཨོན་པ་གཤེན་རབ་མི་པོ་, the word Tön-pa (Na-khi, Dto-mba)

meaning teacher. The Na-khi have no *r* nor do they pronounce clearly a final 191
 consonant unless it be a nasal one. They therefore call him Shi-lo or Shü-lo in-
 stead of Shen-rab.¹³

Tön-pa Shenrab himself is, however, not meant, but, as the Dto-mbas say,
 one of his later incarnations who dwelled in that cave. No date is given and
 it is impossible to find out when he lived there. It is, however, a place of
 pilgrimage for the Dto-mbas, but now very difficult of access on account of
 the absence of a ferry over the Yangtze.

Bbër-ddër is in itself not a sacred place, but it is a place of pilgrimage be-
 cause of its sacred spring, Bbër-p'ër-dtër, and the sacred cave. Handel-
 Mazzetti denies that Bbër-ddër is a sacred place of the Mo-so and relies also
 on the negative statement of the Dutch missionary Kok, who at the time of
 his visit was resident of the Pentecostal Mission at Li-chiang.

To reach the cave it is necessary to cross the stream Bbër-p'ër gyi and climb
 the high slopes of old limestone, forested with pine and oaks. At 9,600 feet
 elevation the cave is reached. It is, however, more of a grotto than a cave. To
 enter it one has to climb into a chimney-like hole, and it is there that the first
 Dto-mba was said to have dwelled. There are two such chimney-like chutes
 separated by a fluted limestone wall, in front of which is an incense burner and
 a pot for holding water, (probably to perform *Ch'ou-ch'ër* purification with
 water). To the left, below the main entrance, is a stone altar for burning oak
 and pine branches as offerings (PLATE 140). The Dto-mbas believe that a
 rock pried loose from the actual wall of the cave and taken home, will make

¹³ See J. F. ROCK, *The Birth and Origin of Dto-mba Shi-lo in Arctus Asia* Vol. VII, 1938,
 pp. 5-85, and BEFE-O, T. XXXVII; 1937, 1, pp. 1-39.